

# NEW LONDON PARKING & TRAFFIC STUDY



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# I. INTRODUCTION

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the New London Parking Study is to assess current traffic and parking conditions in the commercial district and to identify problems and potential solutions.

## **What we did:**

- Compiled existing information, including GIS mapping data layers, tax map parcel layers and any other available survey information.
- Meet with Town Administrator, Road Agent, Town Planner, Zoning Administrator, Police Chief and others to identify issues with traffic and parking in the study area.
- Inventoried parking spaces, identified the number of existing spaces and general locations of parking. This step included an inventory of on-street and off-street parking, including an inventory of handicapped parking facilities. The number of unmarked parking spaces was estimated by using existing site plan requirements.
- Completed four parking occupancy surveys to assess the number and location of parking spaces used on weekdays. Each survey was completed starting at 8 am and ending at 6 pm. Surveys were conducted on July 22, August 20, September 22 and October 21, 2004.
- While determining the study area (see Map 1), Town officials excluded from the occupancy counts several proximate land uses including Colby-Sawyer College, Fire Department, New London Service Station, residential (except where uses were mixed), home based businesses and the Kearsarge Elementary School.
- Evaluated parking conditions at the Barn Playhouse August 25, 2004 matinee performance.
- Performed traffic counts at Pleasant Street, north and south of Main Street; Main Street west of Colby Sawyer entrance; and Main Street, east of Lakeside Road, to measure traffic volumes, once in summer 2004 and once again in fall 2004.
- Performed a turning movement count to determine the Pleasant Street and Main Street intersection performance and identify potential solutions.
- Identified accident locations through data available through the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the local police department.
- Performed data analysis to determine problems and identify solutions related to parking and traffic within the study area.
- Assessed the availability of parking in relation to existing land use activities and their associated local parking requirements.

## **Existing Conditions**

New London has a vibrant downtown with many commercial and residential uses. The Town's population grew almost 3-times larger over the last 50 years, an increase of 2,632 residents. The 2000 population totaled 4,116 and it was estimated that the 2003 population was 4,289 by the Census Bureau.

No fixed route transit service exists in New London. Most commuting is by single-occupant vehicle (62%), followed by carpooling (13.6%), walking (13.2%), and working at home (10.9%). New London has a low percentage of commuters using single occupant vehicles, New Hampshire as a whole had about 82 percent drive alone. The largest employers include the New London Hospital and Colby-Sawyer College.

Communities often have staffing limitations that require parking to be dealt with in a piecemeal manner. In New London, the various parking responsibilities are spread over several departments. The police handle parking enforcement, planning and zoning address permitting, public works handles maintenance, and fees and fines are set by the governing body. It is typical for communities of this size; however, it poses challenges to managing an effective parking system.

## II. PARKING CHARACTERISTICS

There are 928 estimated parking spaces within the study area. Seventy percent of all Downtown parking is private and 30 percent public. Seventy six percent of the spaces are off-street parking lots and 24 percent are on-street parking, which is typical for downtown areas. This equals 226 spaces per 1,000 of New London's year 2000 population. Smaller communities generally provide a higher number of spaces, compared to larger communities, in their downtowns, about 50-100+ spaces per 1,000 people. The relationship between parking spaces and population provides one way to compare one community to another; however, it is important to note that this comparison does not consider what is the optimal number of spaces.

There are few restrictions on parking within the study area. Some parking spaces in the Library lot have a 10-minute restriction and some of the Seamans Road on-street parking has a 3-hour limit but currently is not marked.

Within the study area there are 28 handicap parking spaces, 25 off-street and 3 on-street.

Some of the off-street parking lots are shared among businesses, for example the Lake Sunapee Bank lot shares with the Kidder Office Building and a day care facility. There are other examples of shared arrangements in the Downtown; however, most parking lots serve only one building.

Map 1 depicts the study area and general location of existing parking supply.

Map 1  
New London Traffic and Parking Analysis:  
Study Area



Scale 1:3500  
0.05 0 0.05 0.1 Miles

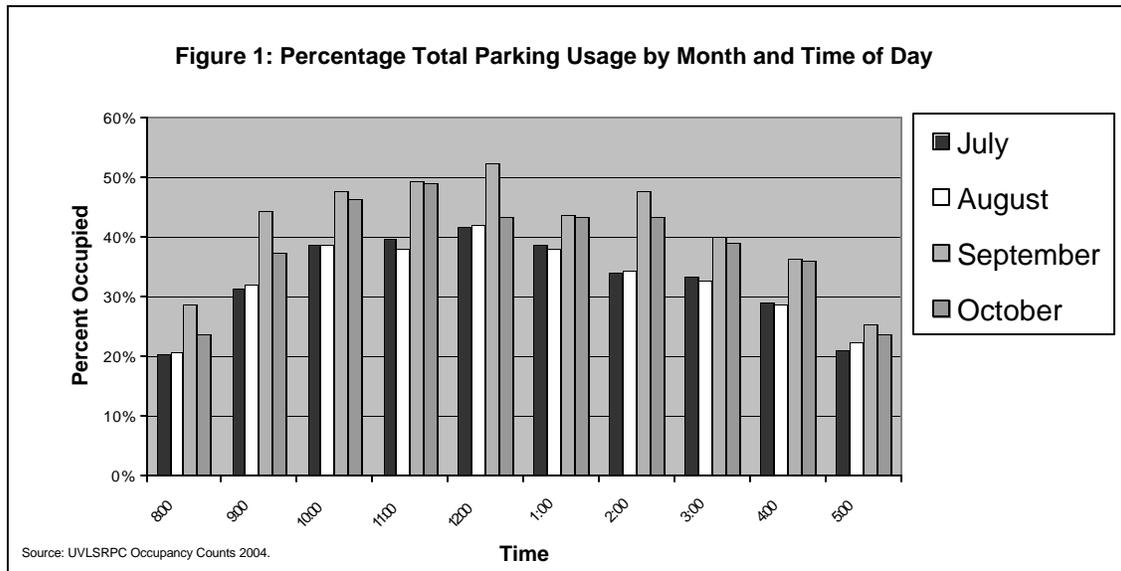


-  Study Area/Parcel Boundary\*
-  On-Street Parking
-  Off-Street Parking
-  Undesignated Parking
- R** Residential



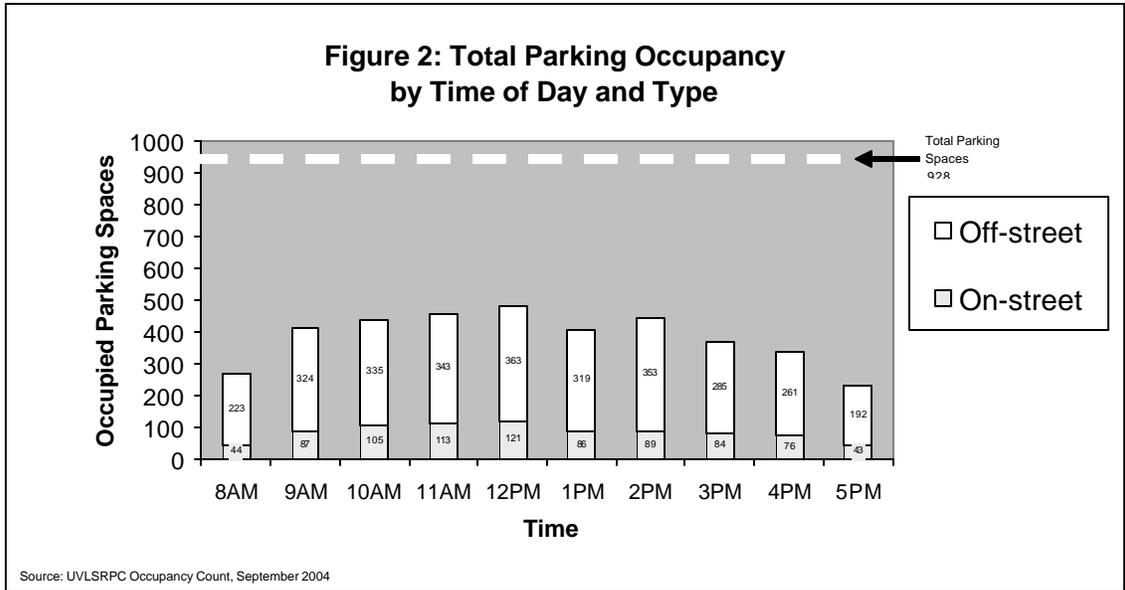
## Parking Occupancy

Parking occupancy counts were taken in July, August, September and October for a total of four counts to assess parking usage. Parking occupancy was counted for each hour of the day from 8a.m. – 6p.m. The highest parking usage was in September. In general, there is higher parking demand in the fall, presumably due to the influx of college students and the start of public schools (see Figure 1).



The most notable change in seasonal parking characteristics is the increase in occupancy of on-street parking near the Colby campus. No vehicles used on-street parking in this area during the July and August occupancy counts.

The pattern of parking occupancy is shown for the September count in Figure 2 for on-street and off-street parking spaces.



Parking occupancy was low in the early morning and continued to rise until it peaked sometime around the noon hour. It then slowly declined. Total occupancy ranged from 25-52 percent; the highest hour of parking usage was at 12 noon during the September count. However, there were relatively heavy demands from 9AM to 2PM. The peak total on-street parking was 55 percent. The numbers of vehicles in each type of space (public/private lots & on-street) over the course of the September count can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1: Parking Occupancy by Space Type and Time of Day**

Time	Public Lots		Private Lots		On-Street (public)		Total Spaces	
	No. of Parkers	Percent of Spaces *	No. of Parkers	Percent of Spaces *	No. of Parkers	Percent of Spaces *	No. of Parkers	Percent of Spaces *
8:00	12	21%	211	32%	44	20%	267	29%
9:00	43	75%	281	43%	87	39%	411	44%
10:00	47	82%	288	44%	105	48%	440	47%
11:00	46	81%	297	46%	113	51%	456	49%
12:00	38	67%	325	50%	121	55%	484	52%
1:00	27	47%	292	45%	86	39%	405	44%
2:00	42	74%	311	48%	89	40%	442	48%
3:00	39	68%	246	38%	84	38%	369	40%
4:00	21	37%	240	37%	76	34%	337	36%
5:00	9	16%	183	28%	43	19%	235	25%

Source: UVLSRPC Occupancy Count, September 2004. \* Percent total spaces in each category

Review of the September occupancy data at a more detailed level shows the areas within the Downtown that have the highest usage during the highest observed hour (12noon). The Downtown was broken up into 7 blocks according to street intersections to allow the evaluation of usage by area (See Table 2 and Map 2 for land uses in each block). Both on and off-street parking was aggregated by block to determine location-specific occupancy rates. Table 3 shows the percentage of parking occupied by block and type of parking. Sufficient parking exists if usage is 90-95 percent or less of spaces available. This is defined as the “effective parking supply.” It is important that the parking supply include a sufficient "surplus" in excess of the necessary spaces to allow for vehicles moving in and out of parking stalls and to lessen the time to search for the final few available spaces.



*Exhibit 1: Unutilized in the summer, on-street parking near Colby-Sawyer is used relatively heavily during the academic season.*

According to these results, the highest usage is Block 7, from Seamans Road to Colby east entrance, which had 75 and 63 percent occupancy. However, this area and its neighboring blocks are below capacity, indicating that adequate parking supply exists. Higher occupancy levels in block 7 can be explained by: 1) Usage of on-street parking in block 7 increased dramatically in the fall with the influx of

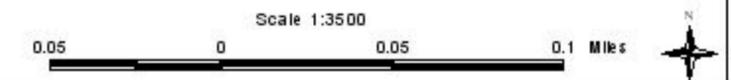
Colby students; 2) the only off-street parking in block 7 is at the Baptist Church, which happened to have an event during the noon period resulting in 75 percent occupancy of their lot.

Map 3 depicts the percentage occupancy levels by block and individual off-street parking lots.

**Table 2: Land Uses within Block Division**

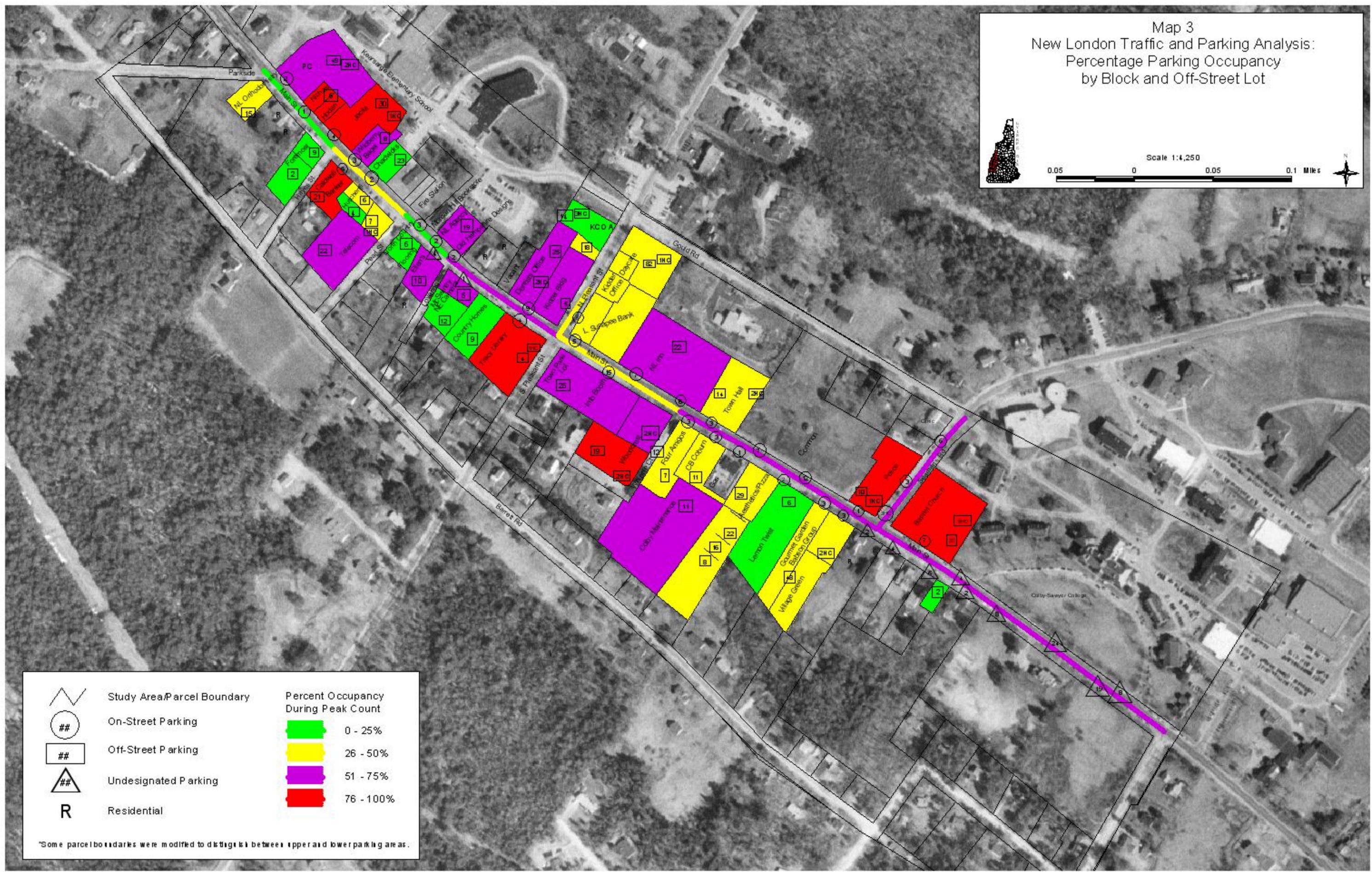
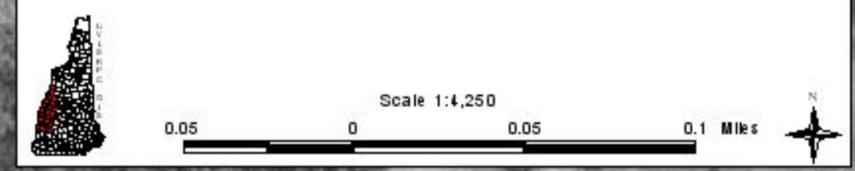
<b>BLOCK 1</b>	<b>MAP/Lot #</b>
NL Orthodontistry, Jillson Insurance, Sage's Interiors	073 002 000
Peter Christians and gift shop	073 077 000
Nichols	073 078 000
Hodan	073 079 000
Jacks, Tatewell Gallery, Vessels & Jewels	073 080 000
Foremost Builders	084 064 000
<b>BLOCK 2</b>	
Wildberry Bagel	073 081 000
Chadwicks Funeral Home	084 065 000
Caldwell Banker, Dead River, Sheer & White, Chadwick & D'anto	084 063 000
Telecom	084 061 000
Hutchens	084 062 000
<b>BLOCK 3</b>	
NL Agency	084 070 000
Old Hampshire Design	084 069 000
North Country Flooring, Farmer's Wife	084 060 000
Ellen's Decorating	084 059 000
Morgan Hill Bookstore	084 068 000
<b>BLOCK 4</b>	
Kearsarge Council on Aging	084 075 000
Dentists	084 072 000
Kidder Building, Timeless Kitchens, ASLPT (rear lot)	084 073 000
McSwiney & NE Camera	084 056 000
Country Homes	084 055 000
Tracy Library	084 054 000
<b>BLOCK 5</b>	
Day Care	084 085 000
Lake Sunapee Bank	084 087 000
Lake Sunapee Group	084 088 000
Kidder Office	084 086 000
NL Inn	084 089 000
Info Booth /Town Parking lot	084 009 000
Woodcrest	084 008 000
<b>BLOCK 6</b>	
Town Hall	084 090 000
Four Amigos	084 004 000
CB Coburn	084 003 000
Police Department	085 002 000
Aesthetics/Pizza	084 001 000
Lemon Twist	085 045 000
Colby Maintenance Building	084 005 000
Village Green, Gourmet Garden, Babson Group and Crossroads	085 044 000
Clinic	085 005 000
<b>BLOCK 7</b>	
Baptist Church	085 032 000
Law Offices	085 037 000

Map 1  
 New London Traffic and Parking Analysis:  
 Study Parcels within Study Area



-  Study Area/Parcel Boundary\*
-  On-Street Parking
-  Off-Street Parking
-  Undesignated Parking
- R** Residential

Map 3  
 New London Traffic and Parking Analysis:  
 Percentage Parking Occupancy  
 by Block and Off-Street Lot



	Study Area/Parcel Boundary	<b>Percent Occupancy During Peak Count</b>	
	On-Street Parking		0 - 25%
	Off-Street Parking		26 - 50%
	Undesignated Parking		51 - 75%
<b>R</b>	Residential		76 - 100%

\*Some parcel boundaries were modified to distinguish between upper and lower parking areas.

<b>Table 3: Parking Occupancy by Block and Type</b>								
<b>Block #</b>	<b>Defining Streets</b>	<b>Total spaces avail</b>	<b>Spaces used off-street</b>	<b>Spaces used on-street</b>	<b>Total spaces Used</b>	<b>Off-street % occp.</b>	<b>On-street %occp.</b>	<b>Total %occp.</b>
1	Parkside to Hayes	121	70	1	71	61%	14%	59%
2	Hayes to Pearl	94	45	5	50	56%	36%	53%
3	Pearl to Lovering	43	18	2	20	51%	25%	47%
4	Lovering to Pleasant	119	45	13	58	46%	62%	49%
5	Pleasant to Whipple	203	90	13	103	55%	34%	51%
6	Whipple to Seamans	239	74	36	110	40%	69%	46%
7	Seamans to Colby E. Entrance	109	21	51	72	75%	63%	66%
<b>TOTAL</b>		928	363	121	484			

Source: UVLSRPC Occupancy Counts, September 2004

Parking problems are often a matter of perception-if you can't find a parking space in front of your destination, there's a problem. In the case of handicapped individuals, this problem is more a reality than perception. Most handicap parking is provided in off-street parking lots; in fact only 3 on-street spaces exist, all near the police station on Seamans Road. The highest total occupancy observed for handicap spaces was 32%. The highest demand for these spaces is at Woodcrest, Village Green, and the Council on Aging. Although there appears to be an adequate number of handicap spaces, additional on-street handicap parking may be worth investigating in the areas between Peal and Lovering Streets.

A parking occupancy inventory can estimate total parking demand for an entire downtown but it cannot estimate parking demand by block or small areas. This is because high occupancies may discourage parkers who would otherwise come and park if the space existed. To determine demand at a block level, parking demand estimates were prepared to help assess potential parking needs.

## **Parking Usage and Local Parking Standards**

Parking demand is generated by the activities and facilities in the area. A direct relationship between building use and the parking demand it generates has been established in many studies over the years. A parking model was created as part of this study to help estimate parking demand by smaller areas of the downtown and give a general idea of how many patrons are attracted to park in the downtown. This is a more accurate way to predict parking usage on a block-by-block basis, because in situations when parking availability is limited, patrons may be discouraged from shopping in town and go elsewhere. This is the primary parking complaint of businesses, that is, there is demand for their good/services, however, no parking to support the patrons. While our occupancy counts show relatively low occupancy rates and indicate it is unlikely unmet demand exists, this approach will provide another comparison to help evaluate parking usage and the adequacy of local parking requirements.

The parking demand for the New London Downtown has been calculated by multiplying the square feet of building space by a "demand ratio" which is the number of spaces required per 1,000 square feet of generating land use such as restaurants, retail, office, etc. The ratios represent a busy day in a peak month, rather than a once a year peak since it would be improbable to expect every tenant and every use in the study area to have peak activity on the same day. Similarly, local parking requirements from New London's Site Plan Review regulations were applied to these same establishments for comparison.

Land use information was gathered and compiled for every building in the study area (see Map 2). The town tax records provided square footage information. Review of site plans gave us the type of use and the breakdown of uses within a building in terms of the square footage occupied. A total of 257,848 square feet of "livable" floor area was identified. To be conservative, no vacancy rate was applied to any of the uses.

These factors are not calibrated to local conditions or supported by local survey/interview and as such can only provide a general sense of parking demand.

**Table 4: Comparison of Total Parking Usage and Required Parking Spaces by Block**

Block #	Defining Streets	Total spaces available	Total spaces Occupied	Parking Demand Est.	Spaces required by local Regulation	Occupancy as % of Parking Required by Regulation
1	Parkside to Hayes	121	71	114	99	28
2	Hayes to Pearl	94	50	57	74	24
3	Pearl to Lovering	43	20	39	47	27
4	Lovering to Pleasant	119	58	105	88	30
5	Pleasant to Whipple	203	103	45	144	41
6	Whipple to Seamans	239	110	156	195	85
7	Seamans to Colby E. Entrance	109	72	97	138	66
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>928</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>302</b>

Notes: The following uses are excluded from the calculations for parking demand estimates and parking demanded by local regulations: Block 2 does not include funeral home, Block 4 does not include KCOA, Block 5 does not include Day Care facility, Block 6 excludes Colby Maintenance building. No parking rates local or national are available for these land uses.

Source: UVLSRPC Occupancy counts, Sept.22, 2004; ITE Parking Generation Rates, 1987 & Parking Principles, Special Report 125, Highway Research Board; New London Site Plan Review Parking Standards, 1990

The existing parking demand for the study area is estimated to be 613 spaces. The average demand ratio for all land uses is 2.38 spaces per 1,000 livable square feet. This is our best estimation given resources and the intended use of the information. In reality, this overall factor would be slightly lower due to the exclusion of several land uses when calculating demand.

The total demand equates to 66% occupancy of the existing parking supply. During the occupancy counts in September, overall occupancy was around 52%.

Comparing September occupancy counts to the parking that is required by local regulation reveals that current parking requirements are in excess of parking demanded, by about 302 spaces. Each block reveals that estimated demand, and required local parking exceed the levels of occupancy surveyed in all blocks (Table 4). This comparison shows the difference between the number of required parking spaces and the occupancy for September's highest hour of usage by block. It appears from this analysis that local parking requirements may be requiring more parking than is typically used.

The total parking required by local regulation is less than the total off-street parking available (786 and 707 respectively). Only 363 of these spaces were occupied during the highest hour of use observed. Off-street parking occupancy for all land uses within each block was then compared to local parking requirements for each land use (see Table 5). This shows that land uses within

the block are satisfying their own demand without reliance on public on-street parking. The percentage occupancy of the available spaces and percentage occupancy of required parking by regulation are telling figures. Results indicate that land uses within the study area have ample parking to support them. Block 7 shows a large difference between these two figures, which is due to counting Colby-Sawyer College patrons parking on-street but excluding their demand from the parking estimates.

<b>Block #</b>	<b>Defining Streets</b>	<b>Off-street Available</b>	<b>Off-street occupied</b>	<b>Spaces required by local Regulation</b>	<b>Occupancy as % available</b>	<b>Occupancy as % of Parking Required by Regulation</b>
1	Parkside to Hayes	114	70	99	61%	70%
2	Hayes to Pearl	80	45	74	56%	61%
3	Pearl to Lovering	35	18	47	51%	38%
4	Lovering to Pleasant	98	45	88	46%	51%
5	Pleasant to Whipple	165	90	144	55%	63%
6	Whipple to Seamans	187	74	195	40%	38%
7	Seamans to Colby E. Entrance	28	21	138	75%	15%

Source: UVLSRPC Occupancy counts, Sept.22, 2004, New London Site Plan Review Parking Standards, 1990

Caution should be used when making comparisons between occupancy levels, required parking and demand estimates, especially when considering amendments to town parking requirements. Downtowns often diminish demand due to the interdependence of similar land uses. This is due to variation in peak periods for different uses and site-specific factors that encourage alternative transportation modes, which can have a large influence on the amount of parking demanded. Using a published factor is a simplistic method to determine parking demand and should be used as one indicator of demand and/or adjusted according to local conditions.

### III. DOWNTOWN TRAFFIC

Several traffic counts were completed as part of this report. Traffic counts were completed in the summer and fall at the following locations:

- Pleasant Street, south of Main Street
- Pleasant Street, north of Main Street
- Main Street, west of Colby Sawyer entrance
- Main Street, east of Lakeside Road
- Pleasant/Main Street intersection

Table 6 summarizes the traffic counts. No trend data is available for any of these locations. According to the data, traffic patterns change from summer to fall. Along Pleasant Street, north of Main Street, a higher traffic volume in the summer is likely attributable to visitors to the lake. In the fall, traffic increases west of Colby Sawyer and on South Pleasant Street.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Summer AWT</b>	<b>Fall AWT</b>	<b>Percentage Difference</b>
Pleasant Street south of Main Street	1,590	1,660	4.4%
Pleasant Street north of Main Street	3,840	3,440	-10.4%
Main Street west of Colby Sawyer Entrance	4,900	5,060	3.3%
Main Street east of Lakeside Road	11,250	10,330	-8.2%

Source: UVLSRPC Traffic Counts; Summer July 13-15, 2004 and Fall September 14-16, 2004

It is difficult to ascertain how meaningful these variations are. However, it seems logical that the two very different populations in New London, college students and summer seasonal residents, have different travel patterns.

A turning movement count was completed for the Pleasant/Main Street intersection in August and October. This intersection is frequently congested for brief periods, especially while schools are in session. The lack of turning lanes and pedestrian traffic contributes to congested conditions.

**Table 7: Main/Pleasant Street Intersection Traffic Summary**

	AM Peak		Mid-Day Peak		PM Peak	
	Time	Volume	Time	Volume	Time	Volume
<b>August Count</b>	7:45-8:45	774	11:45-12:45	1104	4:15-5:15	1205
<b>October Count</b>	7:15-8:15	1010	11:30-12:30	1009	2:00-3:00	1077

Source: UVLSRPC Turning Movement Counts August 25 and October 19, 2004

Three peak hours were identified for the intersection. These peaks changed from the summer to fall counts, most notable is the PM peak change from 4:15-5:15 to 2:00-3:00PM due to Kearsarge Middle School traffic.

A large volume of left turns from Main and Pleasant Streets creates movement conflicts and increases delay at the intersection. A Level-Of-Service (LOS) analysis was completed for the intersection using the PM peak period from the August count. The results show that the South Pleasant Street approach was an LOS D and the north approach a C. Both Main Street approaches operated at an LOS A.

**Table 8: Level-Of-Service Criteria**

<b>LOS</b>	<b>Prevailing Conditions</b>
A	Little to no congestion
B	Slight congestion
C	Average congestion
D	Above average congestion
E	High levels of congestion
F	Extreme congestion

## IV. TRAFFIC SAFETY

State Department of Transportation and local accident reports were reviewed to identify vehicle and pedestrian safety issues. State reports from Jan. '99 – Dec. '03; and local data up to Sept. 7, 2004 were reviewed. According to the reports, there are about 13-17 accidents within the study area each year that are appropriate for consideration. Many accidents are not attributable to traffic conditions, operations, lighting or signage. For example, instances where the car was not placed into park and rolled into an object are not attributable to local conditions, and reports of inattention like this were not considered.

There are no formally identified, NHDOT high accident locations within the study area. However, given traffic volumes, there are certain to be mishaps. In fact numerous studies show higher accident rates in areas with on-street parking. Most accidents happen at the intersection of Main and Pleasant, various locations along Main Street, and in off-street parking areas. Reports reveal that this happens in several ways:

- Rear end collisions, particularly along Main Street. Vehicles yielding to pedestrians crossing the street are sometimes rear-ended by following vehicles.
- Vehicle parking maneuvers, on and off-street, which result in collisions. Vehicles backing out of Jiffy Mart sometimes collide with vehicles on Pleasant Street. Sight distances in this area are block by the Kidder building.



*EXHIBIT 2: Van blocks sight distance at Williams and Main Street intersection.*

- Collisions maneuvering the Main/Pleasant intersection. Vehicles trying to enter the traffic stream sometimes collide with another vehicle that they did not see and/or become impatient and try to enter traffic in small gaps.

These results are not meant to suggest that conditions in New London are unsafe, although improvements could be made to enhance existing conditions. This may include removing parking spaces to enhance safety because occupancy surveys indicate excess parking supply. This could also include increased enforcement of no parking on Main St. near Lovering St intersection and/ or additional parking restrictions near site access points and Town streets to improve sight distances.

## V. OTHER PARKING ISSUES

### **Barn Playhouse**

The Barn Playhouse provides evening and matinee theater performances in its Main Street building which has 326 seats. Located outside the study area in a residential district, the Playhouse was included in this study due to issues with parking overflow onto side streets, and pedestrian safety. The Playhouse is surrounded by Main, Williams, Everett and Parkside Streets. Parking for theater patrons is provided off-street in the Barn Playhouse parking lot located behind the theater, and on-street along peripheral streets.



*EXHIBIT 3: Unorganized parking limits off-street lot capacity*

Parking occupancy and general conditions were assessed for the August 25, 2004 matinee performance which started at 2 p.m. Parking restrictions include six spaces in front of the Playhouse that are handicap and one 5-minute van parking space. Off-street parking in the lot behind the theater is unmarked. Large buses are directed to park on the eastbound side of Main Street just before Williams Street.

Upon commencement of the performance, there were a total of 95 vehicles parked in the Playhouse environs. About 58 percent of these were located in the off-street parking lot and 21 percent parked along Main Street. The remaining vehicles, approximately 14, were observed parked on Williams and Everett Streets.

No parking generation rates are available for theaters. However, New London does have a standard in their site plan review regulations, which is 0.3 spaces per seat. This means 98 spaces are required. The Playhouse cannot meet all the demand for parking with their off-street parking lot, which held an unorganized 55 vehicles during our observation. Striping the off-street parking or manually directing parking would significantly increase the capacity of the lot, but unlikely enough to satisfy all demand. Unless the size of the off-street lot is increased, parking will need to continue along surrounding streets, which if done properly is not necessarily a problem. Several problem spots do warrant consideration:

- Bus parking on Main Street blocks sight distances at the Williams/Main Street intersection and creates a potentially dangerous conditions for pedestrians and vehicles (see Exhibit 6). Moving the bus parking area to another location, possibly Williams Street, would enhance safety.
- Continue to park along Main Street with proper set backs from crosswalks and intersections. Pedestrian facilities on the south side of Main Street would assist patrons in reaching their vehicles safely by keeping them off Main Street (see Exhibit 5).

### **Downtowns and Parking**

The size, type and characteristic of activities in the downtown determine the demand for parking. This is an ever-changing environment and the interactions are complex. Complimentary activities often lesson the demand for parking by offering the ability to share parking lots; an example would be office uses and restaurants, where their peak demands are generally at different times of the day. In theory, office workers could use restaurant space during the day and diners use office parking in the evening when workers have gone home. Another type of interaction is the ability to park in one location and visit several activities, such as go to the bank, get lunch, pay tax bill and visit the bookstore before picking up the kids and going home. These are all part of the community interactions which are missing in suburban strip malls where parking and traffic issues are often great.



*EXHIBIT 4: Bus block sight distance of vehicle turning on to Williams St.*



*EXHIBIT 5: Main St. parking maneuvers and congestion illustrate need for sidewalks on right side of street.*



*EXHIBIT 6: Bus parking blocks sight distance making vehicle entry onto Main Street difficult*

Giving in to pressures to increase the supply of parking in downtowns, particularly when done site-by-site in a piecemeal manner, may disrupt these interactions. Most downtowns were developed before the creation of the automobile and hence the concept of parking. As more parking is created to support the automobile, the ability to walk from one activity to the next is diminished and parking demands are likely to increase. This would also likely contribute to additional traffic congestion as well.

As New London develops, care should be taken in maintaining the interactions common to downtowns and which lesson parking and traffic demand. One possibility worth investigation is providing public parking in a pay-in system. This eliminates the piecemeal approach to providing parking for site development and seeks to maintain a pedestrian-friendly environment and decrease parking demand.

### **Reports of Parking Shortages**

Although the supply of parking in the study area is adequate to support the area land uses, there are reports of parking shortages and issues.

#### **Fire Station – Jack’s Coffee**

One such issue is afternoon pick-ups of school children at the Kearsarge Elementary School. Current traffic circulation for the school does not permit parents to use the school access road (Cougar Court) to pick up children after school. As a result, parents use neighboring private off-street parking, namely the lots of Peter Christians, Jacks, Wildberry Bagel, Chadwicks Funeral Home and New London Agency for pick-ups. This places pressures on these lots’ limited spaces. The school was not evaluated as part of this study; however, inspection during occupancy counts revealed sufficient parking at the school to meet their demands and the issue with pick-ups seems to be strictly a matter of policy. Already, measures are being



*EXHIBIT 7: Kearsarge Elementary School--Restrictions prohibit pick-up near school exit and results in pressures on nearby private lots.*

taken by downtown business users in this area to more effectively use existing parking by parking their vehicles in the rear school lot, presumably to compensate for the spaces lost during school pick-ups. During the summer occupancy counts we observed between 8-10 vehicles parked in the school lots near these same businesses. This measure seems to work well, as the school, even while in session, has ample parking.

Kearsarge Elementary School is in the process of bonding for the construction of a new facility outside of New London. This may offer possibilities to formalize public parking in this area.

### **Town Hall**

The Town has an arrangement to use the church parking lot behind the Town Offices. During occupancy counts we observed an average of 5-11 spaces occupied in this lot. We were unable to determine if these were strictly users related to the Town Offices or church events. Usage in the church lot is fairly constant throughout the day. Nonetheless, it seems possible that the Town Hall is unable to satisfy its parking demand with its own off-street parking. The existing relationship with the church was observed to work well.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are general recommendations followed by Table 9, which identifies specific problems and possible countermeasures.

1. We recommend that New London take no immediate action to increase the existing parking supply in the downtown.
2. Develop a parking management program. A parking advisory committee could oversee this process and could include the many stakeholders in downtown parking, such as the Town, merchants and the college. Responsibilities could include:
  - Continued monitoring of parking supply and demand
  - Identify safety and parking issues within the Downtown area
  - Inform public of parking needs and solutions
  - Plan for growth and the possibility of new parking facilities (maybe a public pay-in system to avoid private piecemeal parking development)
  - Recommend changes to Town parking requirements
3. Before increasing the supply of parking consider lower-cost mechanisms to use existing parking supply more efficiently.
  - Investigate parking turnover on-street and consider time limit restrictions to increase supply.
  - Consider increased parking enforcement and fines to discourage illegal parking, especially in unsafe areas.
  - Examine the development of directional signage to make patrons aware of underutilized parking facilities.
  - Coordinate with Kearsarge Middle School to address parking for after school pick-ups. Investigate use of school parking should the school change location.
  - Consider arrangements that allow public parking on church lots and other off-peak facilities.
  - Consider identifying unorganized off-street lots and require more efficient layouts during site plan review.

**Table 9: Parking/Traffic Problems & Countermeasures**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Countermeasures</b>
Private off-street parking used for school pick up	Reorganize school traffic circulation to allow student pick-ups onsite.
Parked vehicles block sight distances at intersections and crosswalks	Enhance sight distances by restricting parking near intersections and crosswalks and mark appropriately. Consider relocating crosswalks. Remove the on-street parking space in front of Lake Sunapee Bank nearest to Pleasant St.
Rear end collisions on Main St.	Reduce speed limit if justified by further study. Install/improve signing or markings for crosswalks. If traffic signal is installed, include pedestrian phase.
Bus parking for the Barn Playhouse blocks sight distance & spillover parking in residential neighborhood	Move bus parking on Main Street to another location. Direct parking in off-street lot or stripe. Enforce no parking in residential neighborhood.
Unseen off-street parking underutilized	Identify and provide signage directing users to available parking. Consider other methods for changing the perception of inadequate parking.
Parking lot collisions	Wider aisles in parking lots. Stripe unmarked lots.
Traffic volumes at Main/Pleasant St.	Investigate traffic signal or roundabout. Consider rerouting traffic by prohibiting left hand turns from Main to Pleasant St. Install turn lanes.
Local parking standards require more parking than usage counts	Calibrate parking demand estimates and use factors to develop own parking standards for use in permitting development.
Limited on-street handicap parking	Consider restricting some additional on-street parking to handicap use; use caution to ensure proper conditions from area business to parking space e.g. ramps.